

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

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R 111825Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8705

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

GEORGETOWN 1018

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BRIDGETOWN 0586

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR ELAB BB TD

SUBJ: UNITED LABOR FRONT SEEKS SUPPORT FROM BARBADOS WORKERS
UNION

1. ACCORDING TO A LOCAL PRESS REPORT, RICHARD JACOBS, AN OFFICIAL OF TRINIDAD'S UNITED LABOR FRONT ARRIVED IN BARBADOS ON APRIL 10 SEEKING MORAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM THE BARBADOS WORKERS' UNION. JACOBS, A LECTURER AT THE ST. AUGUSTINE CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WEST INDIES, SAID THAT HIS VISIT WAS PART OF A REGIONAL CAMPAIGN THE ULF WAS CONDUCTING TO SOLICIT FOOD AND FINANCIAL AID FOR ITS 30,000 STRIKING MEMBERS. ALTHOUGH DESCRIBING THE SITUATION IN TRINIDAD AS TENSE AND DESPERATE, HE CLAIMED THAT THE ULF WAS AGAINST VIOLENCE AND WOULD DO ALL IN ITS POWER TO MAINTAIN CALM IN TRINIDAD. EXPLAINING THAT THE ULF IS A COMBINATION OF FOUR UNIONS, JACOBS ADDED THAT THESE UNIONS WERE NOW LOCKED INTO A STRUGGLE WITH "CAPITALISTS IN OIL AND SUGAR" IN PARTICULAR, AS WELL AS OTHER SECTORS OF THE TRINIDAD ECONOMY. THE ULF IS APPEALING TO WORKERS AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT THE CARIBBEAN TO GIVE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE IN THE PRESENT STRUGGLE WHICH JACOBS BELIEVES WILL DEFINITELY INTENSIFY AND

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PERHAPS LEAD TO A GENERAL STRIKE. HOWEVER, UNDER NO CIRCUM-

STANCES WILL THE ULF RETREAT, JACOBS SAID. HE NOTED THAT THERE WAS A "TOTAL BREAKDOWN OF LAW AND ORDER IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO."

2. WARNING BARBADIANS TO USE THEIR GAS (BARBADOS GETS ITS BOTTLED GAS FROM TRINIDAD) AS SPARINGLY AS POSSIBLE, JACOBS EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THESE CONSUMERS WOULD REALIZE THAT THE ULF IS FIGHTING FOR "JUSTICE, PEACE, AND BREAD." ON APRIL 11 JACOBS IS EXPECTED TO LEAVE BARBADOS FOR JAMAICA, ANTIGUA, AND GRENADA WHERE HE IS SLATED TO MEET WITH UNION OFFICIALS.

3. COMMENT: ACCORDING TO A RELIABLE HIGH-LEVEL BWU SOURCE, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT JACOBS EVEN HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET YESTERDAY WITH BWU GENERAL SECRETARY FRANK WALCOTT OR ANY OF HIS SENIOR ASSISTANTS BECAUSE THEY WERE TIED UP WITH A MEETING. IT IS ALSO UNLIKELY THAT WALCOTT WHO IS A STICKLER FOR PROTOCOL WOULD COMMIT BWU TO AID STRIKING ULF WITHOUT A DIRECT REQUEST FROM HEAD OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO LABOR CONGRESS.
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